

XXXVII.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.*

[Continued from p. 507.]

84. *Allen on the Types of the North-American Genera of Birds.*

[The Types of the North-American Genera of Birds. By J. A. Allen. Bull. Am. Mus. N. H. vol. xxii. art. xvi. pp. 279-384 (1907).]

This is an essay upon what is known as the "method of elimination" used by some systematists to ascertain the correct types of genera in zoology when the author of the generic term has omitted to specify them. Mr. Allen describes this doctrine as follows:—"All agree that a generic name proposed for a heterogeneous group of species should be used for one of its original components. If in the course of its dismemberment all the component species have been removed to other genera, the name of the original genus should be restored to the component of the group which was last removed. If a part of the component species have been thus taken out and others left, the reviser of the genus can select any one of the remaining species as its type, and such assignment cannot afterwards be interfered with. In case none of the original species have been removed, the first reviser has the right to designate any one of the original species as the type of the genus."

Against the "method of elimination," which certainly leads to some unfortunate results if severely applied, Mr. Witmer Stone and others have promulgated the plan that the *first* species of such compound genera should always be taken as the type, and maintain that this is far the simpler method and easier of application. Yet so "evidently disastrous" would be the "method of priority" if unrestricted in its application, that its advocates do not propose to bring Linnaeus's names within its scope. To do so would, in fact, necessitate the alteration of many of our most familiar names, especially in the case of those writers who insist on using the tenth edition of the 'Systema Naturæ.'

In order to compare the relative merits of the two rival

systems—"elimination" and "selection of the first species,"—Dr. Allen takes the genera of North-American birds for a trial test, with the view of discovering which of the two systems will involve the greater number of changes of names. The last edition of the 'Check-list' and its supplements contain the names of 415 genera and subgenera. These are all discussed by Dr. Allen in due order, and their types and the reasons for selecting the types are clearly explained. Before this is done, however, two chapters are introduced concerning the "First Reviser" and "Brissonian Genera." The "First Reviser" is defined to be "the author who first designates a type for a genus originally proposed without a type." The usage of the Brissonian generic names, as first proposed in the Report of the British Association Committee on Nomenclature in 1842, is strongly advocated, and has until recently, as Dr. Allen correctly states, met with nearly universal acceptance.

In the summary of his useful paper Dr. Allen shews that the adoption of the "Elimination" plan would necessitate the change of only 4 generic names of North-American Birds, whereas the "First-species" scheme, if strictly applied, would result in the alteration of at least 15 generic terms, and would affect the names of 27 species and 15 subspecies. He therefore pronounces in favour of the former scheme, and those who deprecate changes of names of any sort, when they can be avoided, will doubtless agree with him. But there are others, we fear, who delight in the process of hunting up forgotten names and actually take credit to themselves for discovering them.

In conclusion, we venture to make a few remarks on some of Dr. Allen's determinations, although we fear that they may cause us to be included in his category of those "temperamental kickers who ignore any rule that is contrary to their personal tastes or preferences" (!).

In the first place, we cannot allow that mistakes and faults in writing generic names are not to be corrected when their derivations are obvious. We should, therefore, write *Æthya* (not *Æthya*), *Leptoptila* (not *Leptotila*), *Æstrelata*

(not *Æstrelata*), &c. In the next place, we must protest against the revival of such uncertain and forgotten terms as "*Erolia*" and "*Tangavius*." It is exceedingly doubtful for what species these names were intended, and there are no known types to consult. Nor can we consent to giving Brisson's generic terms precedence over those of Linnæus, the author of the binomial system. We therefore abjure *Anhinga* and *Pavoncella*. The fallacy of making *Ixoreus* applicable to *Turdus naevius* has been already explained on more than one occasion. The type of Bonaparte's genus was not *Turdus naevius* (as he supposed it to be), but *Myiotheretes rufiventris*. This is demonstrated by the mounted specimen in the "Galerie" of the great French museum. True, Bonaparte supposed the bird in question to be *Turdus naevius*, but even princes are liable to make mistakes, and *Ixoreus* is, in fact, merely a useless synonym of *Myiotheretes*.

85. 'The Avicultural Magazine.'

[Avicultural Magazine. The Journal of the Avicultural Society. New Series. Vol. v. Nos. 6-8, Apr.-June 1907.]

The most striking paper in these numbers is that by Prof. C. O. Whitman, of Chicago, in continuation of a discussion on the direction of evolution as evidenced by the chequers and bars on the plumage of Pigeons; but other regular contributors write, as usual, on individual species or forms of birds. The Rev. H. D. Astley has an article on the Shâma (with a coloured plate of male and female); Mr. D. Seth-Smith no less than four, on *Munia flaviprymna* and *M. castaneithorax* with an intermediate state of plumage, on Lorikeets in captivity, on the Kakapo (*Stringops habroptilus*), and on Mr. Astley's aviaries at Benham Park; Dr. Butler writes on *Icterus vulgaris* (col. pl.); Capt. Perreau on the origin of the Bengalese [Finch]; Mr. Teschemaker on the nesting of *Serinus angolensis* (pl. of nest); and Mr. St. Quintin on the breeding in captivity of the American Wigeon and other species. The paper by Mr. G. Dalgleish on the Moorhens and Coots of India seems to give little new information.

86. *Bangs on Birds from Costa Rica and Chiriqui.*

[Notes on Birds from Costa Rica and Chiriqui, with Descriptions of new Forms and new Records for Costa Rica. By Outram Bangs. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. xix. pp. 101-112 (1906).]

This is a description of the novelties and noticeable specimens met with in a series of 3365 skins formed during many years' work by Mr. C. F. Underwood, mostly in Costa Rica, and representing about 611 species and subspecies. Mr. Thayer bought the collection and submitted it to Mr. Bangs's examination. Besides containing representatives of most of the rarer Costa-Rican species, the collection, we are told, is rich in young birds in nestling-plumage; there are also in many cases specimens of the same species both in freshly-moulted and in worn abraded condition, which much increase its value.

The following species and subspecies are described as new:—*Pyrrhura hoffmanni gaudens* (Chiriqui), *Eumomota superciliaris australis* (Costa Rica), *Saucerottia cyanura impatiens* (Costa Rica), *Hypocnemis naevioides capitata* (Costa Rica), *Xenicopsys variegaticeps idoneus* (Chiriqui), *Thryorchilus ridgwayi* (Costa Rica), *Cyanolyca blandina* (Chiriqui), and *Chlorospingus regionalis* (Costa Rica).

87. *Bangs on the Wood-Rails of America north of Panama.*

[On the Wood-Rails, Genus *Aramides*, occurring north of Panama. By Outram Bangs. Amer. Nat. xli. no. 483 (1907).]

Mr. Bangs reviews the Rails of the genus *Aramides* which occur in America north of Panama, and admits three species, the last (*A. albiventris*) being divided into three subspecies, of which one (*A. mexicanus*) is described as new to science.

88. *Bangs's Notes on various American Birds.*

Besides the articles above mentioned, Mr. Bangs has sent us separate copies of five short papers in the 'Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington' (vols. xix. & xx.). In the first of these (vol. xix. p. 43) he seeks to alter the well-established name of the Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes*

migratorius). As we prefer to commence our nomenclature with the twelfth edition of Linnæus this proposal does not affect us. In the next paper (xx. p. 29) a new race of the Hepatic Tanager, from Jalapa, Mexico, is named *Pyrranga hepatica dextra*. In the third (xx. p. 31) an Owl (*Rhinoptynx clamator*) is added to the Costa-Rican Ornis; it had been previously obtained by Arcé in Veragua. In the fourth (xx. p. 53) the *Coccyzus minor* of the Grenadines (W.I.) is separated as a new subspecies (*C. m. grenadensis*). In the fifth paper (xx. p. 55) Mr. Bangs renames the *Siptornis* of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, which he had previously called *S. antisimensis*, *S. hellmayri*, his attention having been called by Dr. Hellmayr to the differences between these two forms.

89. Buturlin on Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, and Shrikes.

[Notes on White-backed Woodpeckers and Rock-Nuthatches. Caucasian and Turkestan Red-backed Shrikes. By S. A. Buturlin. Mitt. d. Kauk. Mus., Bd. iii. Lief. 1. Tiflis, 1907. 80 pp.]

This paper is in Russian, but the author kindly adds a version of it in English. According to M. Buturlin's views, the group of *Dendrocopus leuconotus* embraces 8 species and subspecies, of which *D. sinicus* (from N. China), *D. l. ussurriensis* (from the Ussuri), *D. l. voznesenskii* (from Kamtchatka), and *D. l. carpathicus* are described as new. The Palearctic Rock-Nuthatches (*Rupisitta*, subg. nov.) are divided into 8 species or races, of which *Sitta zarudnyi* (from Asia Minor) is described as new.

Under another heading M. Buturlin treats of the Red-backed Shrikes of Caucasia and Turkestan. He has already named the Caucasian form "*kobylini*" ('Ibis,' 1906, p. 416); he now points out the characters of the race of Turkestan, and calls it *Lanius (Enneoctonus) collurio loudoni*.

90. Buturlin on Bean-Geese.

[On Bean-Geese. By S. A. Buturlin. Journ. Bombay N. II. Soc. 1907, pp. 603-607.]

This paper is chiefly devoted to criticisms of an article by Mr. E. W. Oates in the same journal (vol. xvii. p. 950), and to

the support of M. Alphéraky, with whom Mr. Oates disagreed. We need not enter here into a discussion of the moot points concerning the various forms of Bean-Geese, but may refer to another paper recently published at St. Petersburg by M. Alphéraky himself*.

91. *Catalogue of the Booth Collection.*

[Catalogue of the Cases of Birds in the Dyke-Road Museum, Brighton, giving a few descriptive notes and the localities in which the specimens were found by E. T. Booth. Third edition, 1901. Brighton.]

No naturalist who visits Brighton should fail to inspect the Dyke-Road Museum, in which the splendid collection of British Birds made by the late Mr. E. T. Booth is lodged. We may even say that any ornithologist would do well to make a special journey to Brighton for the purpose. This is certainly one of the best-mounted collections of native birds in the British Islands.

A copy of the third edition of the Catalogue, which was originally written by Mr. Booth in 1876, has lately reached us, and we have great pleasure in calling attention to it. It has been carefully prepared by Mr. A. F. Griffith, M.B.O.U., who is a member of the Town Council's Committee in charge of the Museum, and takes very great interest in it.

Into the original "Booth Collection" only specimens obtained by Mr. Booth himself were allowed to enter. This rule has, naturally, been relaxed since his death, and many good additions have been made to the 308 cases.

In September 1891 the valuable collection of birds formed by the late Mr. William Borrer, of Cowfold, was purchased by the Town and added to the Booth Collection. Since that date many other examples of rare species, mostly obtained in Sussex and in the adjoining districts, have been received from various sources, amongst which we may mention the Gyr-Falcon, the Snowy Owl, the Aquatic

* "A few words in reply to Mr. E. W. Oates's paper on the species of Bean-Geese."

Warbler, the Tawny Pipit, the American Bittern, and the Sooty Shearwater.

Each species is placed in a separate case, which is fitted up to represent, as far as possible, the natural surroundings of the bird in its native haunts. The cases being of different sizes it has not, unfortunately, been possible to arrange them in exact systematic order.

92. *Chapman on the Ornithology of the Borders.*

[Bird Life of the Borders on Moorland and Sea, with Faunal Notes extending over Forty Years. By Abel Chapman. London, 1907 : Gurney and Jackson. 8vo. Pp. i-xii, 1-458; 27 full-page and many text illustrations.]

In the first edition of this book * Mr. Chapman gave an accurate and life-like description of the Birds of the Border Country, coupled with a pleasing account of the district itself. He has now enlarged the scope of the work to include portions of Roxburgh- and Berwick-shires formerly omitted, as may be seen from the very clear map with which he has supplied us. The chapters on Red Grouse and Black-game are a perfect mine of information to the sportsman and naturalist, while those dealing with wild-fowling on the Northumberland coast may be considered, as the author claims, the best exposition of the subject to be found in contemporary writings; they hold the reader's attention throughout, and well describe the dangers and difficulties of this exciting aquatic sport. Nor are these the only points of excellence in a most interesting local book; all the species from the smallest to the largest come in for their due share of attention, whether they be Warblers, Birds-of-Prey, Geese, Waders, or Sea-fowl; the process of Migration, moreover, affords material for one chapter, and notes on game-fishes for another.

We must, however, hold Mr. Chapman accountable for ignoring the work of his predecessors, and demur to the statement on his first page that he is writing of "a wild corner neglected and unknown." On the contrary, few districts have been better worked, as may be seen by consulting the

* See 'Ibis,' 1889, p. 245.

volumes of 'Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club' from 1831 to the present day. The author may fairly claim a better knowledge of the south of Northumberland, where he resides, and of the special sport of wild-fowling; but his acquaintance with the North-eastern Borderland leaves something to be desired, and is by no means so thorough as that of Dr. George Johnston and his successors, while the fact that the earliest of Field Clubs finds nowadays less scope for its ornithological energies serves but to shew how much it has accomplished in time past.

93. *Clark on new Birds from Eastern Asia.*

[Eighteen new Species and one new Genus of Birds from Eastern Asia and the Aleutian Islands. By Austin H. Clark. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xxxii. p. 467.]

This paper is based mainly on a series of 554 skins obtained by the late Mr. P. L. Jouy during a residence of over three years in Corea, which are said to form the most important collection ever made in that country. Mr. Clark was allowed to make use of it in connection with his work on the ornithological results of a recent cruise of the U.S. Fisheries' Steamer 'Albatross' in the Northern Pacific. Besides establishing a new genus *Tisa* (type *Emberiza variabilis* Temm.), Mr. Clark characterizes as new the following species and subspecies:—

Ardea cinerea jouyi (Corea), *Phasianus karpowi buturlini* (Tchusima), *Lagopus japonicus* (Hondo), *L. rupestris chamberlaini* (Adak Island, Aleutians), *Æsalon regulus insignis* (Corea), *Cerchneis perpallida* (Corea), *Bubo tenuipes* (Corea), *Syrnium ma* (Corea), *Syrnium uralense japonicum* (Hokkaido), *S. u. hondoense* (Hondo), *Dryobates leucotos coreensis* (Corea), *D. l. ussurianus* (Siberia), *Gecinus canus griseo-viridis* (Corea), *Pericrocotus cinereus intermedius* (Corea), *Olbiorchilus fumigatus peninsulae* (Corea), *O. f. amurensis* (Amoor), *Remiz (!) consobrinus suffusus* (Corea), and *Acredula trivirgata magna* (Corea).

Some of these "subspecies" appear to us to be based on very slender characters, and *Æsalon regulus insignis* is founded upon a single specimen in "juvenile plumage."

94. 'The Emu.'

[The Emu. A Quarterly Magazine to popularize the Study and Protection of Native Birds. Vol. vi. pt. 4, April 1907.]

The longest paper in this part of our Australian contemporary consists of an account of the explorations undertaken by the Members of the Sixth Congress of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union in Tasmania, with a most interesting description of the birds observed at Mt. Wellington, Launceston, and Mount Barrow. The writer, Mr. J. W. Mellor, also gives his experiences on Mount Arthur and in the newly opened up Great Lake District, which were visited after the meeting was concluded.

Mr. F. L. Berney continues his notes on the Richmond region of North Queensland, and Mr. G. F. Hill begins an article on the birds of the Ararat district in Victoria, while the breeding-habits of *Casarca variegata* at Resolution Island and of *Pelagodroma marina* at Port Phillip Bay furnish material for the pens of Mr. Richard Henry and Messrs. A. H. Mattingley and A. G. Campbell. "The Family Certhiidae in Australia" is the title of another article by the last-named, in which the genera *Climacteris* and *Sittella* are discussed at length; and Mr. F. E. Horne writes at some length on *Pycnoptilus floccosus*.

95. *Field Museum of Natural History.*

[Field Museum of Natural History. Annual Report of the Director to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1906. Chicago, 1907.]

The great Museum of Chicago has recently suffered a sad loss by the decease of its founder and benefactor Mr. Marshall Field. For a year before his death he was busy planning the erection of a new building upon a very extensive scale, and he has left by his will a bequest of four million dollars for its accomplishment. The name of the Museum has been appropriately changed to perpetuate his memory.

The list of the staff tells us that Dr. D. G. Elliot, well known to many of us, has given up the Curatorship of the Department of Zoology, and has been appointed Honorary and Supervisory Curator of the same Department.

Mr. Charles E. Cory is now Curator of the Department, and Dr. N. Dearborn is Assistant for Ornithology.

From what is stated in the Report it will be evident that a large amount of excellent work has been done in all the four Departments of the Museum during the past year, while no less than 32 separate expeditions for the acquisition of specimens have been sent out. Dr. Dearborn himself went to Guatemala, and obtained upwards of one thousand bird-skins. This is obviously a much better mode of stocking a museum than by purchasing stray specimens from dealers, and might advantageously be more often followed in some of the larger Institutions of Europe.

96. *Finsch on Birds new to the Javan Ornis.*

[Neue Arten zur Javanischen Ornis. Von Dr. O. Finsch. J. f. O. 1907, p. 301.]

Herr Max Bartels, well known for his writings on the birds of Java, has lately made an excursion to the Thousand Islands, which lie in the Java Sea about fifty miles north of Batavia. Amongst the species of which examples were obtained are two new to science, which Dr. Finsch describes as *Chibia ter-meuleni* and *Zosterops maxi*. A complete account of the collection is being prepared.

97. *Goeldi's 'Album of Amazonian Birds.'*

[Album de Aves Amazonicas, organizado pelo Professor Dr. Emilio A. Goeldi. 3º Fascicolo. 1906.]

The issue of the third fasciculus brings Dr. Goeldi's 'Album of Amazonian Birds' to a conclusion. We have already noticed the two former parts (see 'Ibis,' 1902, pp. 149, 510, and 1904, p. 151), and have explained the nature and object of the work, which will, no doubt, have great effect in calling attention to the rich Avifauna of the Amazon and its affluents. The 48 plates, which are printed in colour and contain several figures each, portray the outlines and varied plumages of all the leading and characteristic forms of the Amazonian Ornis, and will render their identification comparatively easy. We congratulate Dr. Goeldi on having completed this useful

piece of work before his final retirement from Pará and return to Europe, which we have already announced*.

98. *Grinnell on the Birds of the Santa Barbara Islands.*

[Report on the Birds recorded during a Visit to the Islands of Santa Barbara, San Nicolas, and San Clemente in the Spring of 1897. By Joseph Grinnell. Pasadena, California, August 1897. 26 pp.]

In some remarks on a paper of Dr. Mearns (see above, p. 498) it was mentioned that we had never seen the memoir of which the title is given above. The author has now kindly supplied the want so expressed by sending us a copy of it, for which we offer him our best thanks.

Mr. Grinnell (now, we believe, Editor of 'The Condor') was the leader of a scientific expedition sent out by the Pasadena Academy of Sciences, in 1897, to explore the Santa Barbara group, and the present paper contains the results arrived at, so far as regards the birds met with on the three above-mentioned islands, which lie from 30 to 60 miles off the coast of Southern California. During the expedition 450 bird-skins and many eggs were collected. On Santa Barbara 14 species of land-birds were observed, on San Nicolas 9, and on San Clemente 31. The list of water-birds contains the names of 24 species. Good field-notes are given.

The Avifauna of the Santa Barbara group is purely Californian, except in the case of four or five possibly distinguishable forms which have been raised to the rank of "subspecies."

99. *Pycraft on the Anatomy of the Penguins.*

[On some Points in the Anatomy of the Emperor and Adélie Penguins. By W. P. Pycraft. Nat. Hist. of the National Antarctic Expedition, vol. ii. London, 1907.]

The authorities of the British Museum did well to place the specimens of the nestlings and embryos of the Penguins collected during the National Antarctic Expedition in the hands of Mr. Pycraft. Though several excellent memoirs

* See above, p. 511.

on the structure of this anomalous group have been written of late years, Mr. Pycraft has not failed to find new points on which to enlighten us, and has added much to our knowledge of the structure of these birds. He begins by describing the pterylosis of the adult Penguin, and repudiates the oft-repeated myth that its feathers are "scale-like and reptilian." In fact, though "unquestionably degenerate," they have no more likeness to the scales of reptiles than the feathers of other birds. But the principal part of the memoir is devoted to the nestling's down and the successive plumages of adolescence, on which much new information is given. The syrinx of the Emperor Penguin and its intestinal tract are also described and figured.

In the concluding summary Mr. Pycraft reviews the information to be acquired from the remains of fossil Penguins recently discovered in Patagonia, New Zealand, and Seymour Island, and discusses its bearing on the origin and affinities of the group. The Penguins, he says, "have probably descended from birds which possessed full powers of flight." The Steganopodes must be regarded "as representing a common ancestral stock, from which have descended the Sphenisci, Colymbi, and Tubinares on the one hand, and the Ciconiæ, Accipitres, and Anseres on the other."

100. *South African Ornithologists' Union, Journal of.*

[The Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union. Second Series. Vol. i. No. 1. Pretoria, June 1907.]

The first number of the new (second) series of the 'Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union' was published at Pretoria in June last, and contains many interesting papers.

The first article by Mr. A. K. Haagner, who is now chief Editor, contains good contributions to our knowledge of the Honey-guides (Indicatoridæ), both as regards their parasitic habits and their bodily structure. The tooth-like appendages on the beak of the nestling in these birds described and figured here are, we believe, quite a new discovery and of

great interest. Mr. Haagner will pardon us for reminding him that Selater was, we believe, the first writer who raised the Honey-guides to family rank (see his article in 'The Ibis,' 1870, p. 176), and emphasized their structural peculiarities. After Mr. Haagner's paper Major Sparrow continues his valuable field-notes on South-African birds, Mr. Roberts gives us further information as to the curious breeding-habits of the Pin-tailed Widow-bird (*Vidua principalis*), and Messrs. Taylor and Bucknill contribute an excellent account of the birds met with in the Amsterdam district of the Transvaal, near the Swazi-land border. Other good articles by Mr. Symonds (on the birds of Kroonstad, Orange River Colony), by Dr. Turner (on his expedition into Portuguese East Africa), by Mr. Thomsen (on the Locust-birds of the Transvaal), and by Mr. Haagner and Mr. Ivy (on the birds of the Albany Division of the Cape Colony) follow, the last being illustrated by a well-drawn plate of eggs, amongst which is a figure of that of *Irrisor viridis*. We have here also further news of the parasitic breeding-habits of *Indicator*. Occasional notes and reviews conclude this very successful number of our contemporary.

101. *Thayer and Bangs on the Birds of Sonora.*

[Breeding Birds of the Sierra de Antonez, North Central Sonora. By John E. Thayer and Outram Bangs. Pr. Biol. Soc. Washington, xix. p. 17.]

In the breeding-season of 1905, Mr. W. W. Brown, Jr., made a collection of birds for Mr. Thayer in the Sierra de Antonez in North Central Sonora, about 95 miles south of the Arizona boundary. The authors give us a list of them with a few notes. Mr. Brown took many sets of eggs, the most interesting of which were perhaps those of *Aimophila* (scr. *Hæmophila*) *maccleodii* Brewster. *Psaltriparus plumbeus cecaumenorum* (?), a "well-marked southern form of *P. plumbeus*," is described as a new species.

102. *Thayer and Bangs on a new Thrasher.*

[A new Race of the Californian Thrasher from Lower California. By John E. Thayer and Outram Bangs. Proc. New Engl. Zool. Cl. iv. p. 17.]

Torostoma redivivum helvum (the authors will kindly excuse

us for putting the adjectives into the same gender as the substantive) is the representative subspecies of *T. redivivum* in Lower California, distinguished by its paler colour.

103. *Van Oort's Notes on Birds from the Leyden Museum.*

Dr. E. D. Van Oort sends us separate copies of three "notes" which he has contributed to the 29th volume of the 'Notes from the Leyden Museum.' In the first of these (No. vi.) he shews that the Australian Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) "occurs as a rare straggler in the Eastern Austro-Malay Archipelago, and that its western limits are N.E. Celebes and Timor." In the second (No. vii.) he describes a new subspecies of *Rhectes* from Batanta under the name *Pitohui cerviniventris pallidus*, and gives a list of the specimens of this genus in the Leyden Museum. In the third note (No. viii.) Dr. Van Oort shews that the typical specimens of *Edoliosoma morio* (Temm.) were obtained by Forsten in Northern Celebes and belong to the northern form which Meyer and Wigglesworth have called *E. morio septentrionalis*. But this is, in fact, the true *E. morio*; he, therefore, proposes to name the southern form *E. morio wigglesworthi*.

104. *Whitaker on the Birds of Nottinghamshire.*

[Notes on the Birds of Nottinghamshire. By J. Whitaker. Nottingham: Walter Black & Co., 1907. 8vo. Pp. i-xviii, 1-298; 2 col. pl. and 10 illustrations.]

This pleasantly written book—by a keen lover of nature, and not, as the author is careful to inform us, by a scientific naturalist—gives an excellent popular account of the county and its birds, and may strongly be recommended to all dwellers in the Midlands, though it is of comparatively little use to advanced Ornithologists. Nottinghamshire, besides containing the forests of Birkland, Mansfield, and Rufford, with much rough heather country, is noted for its splendid parks and fine sheets of water, while the Trent and other smaller streams naturally attract many kinds of water-fowl.

Mr. Whitaker commences his volume with an Introduction of considerable length, in which, among other details, we find

accounts of Willughby, Wolley, and other lesser lights of the ornithological world: he supplements this with useful notes on no less than two hundred and fifty-nine species of birds, and makes a point of tabulating the dates of arrival of the spring migrants. Of special interest are the first occurrences in Britain of the Dusky Thrush and Egyptian Nightjar, the earliest record of the breeding of the Tufted Duck in this country, and the local appearances of the Sand-Grouse in 1888. Perhaps we should hardly object, in a popular book, to including the evidence of keepers and taxidermists, but we certainly do not, as yet, feel inclined to admit the Red-tailed Buzzard and the Spotted Sandpiper of America to the British list.

105. Wilson on the Birds of the National Antarctic Expedition.

[National Antarctic Expedition. Natural History, vol. ii. Vertebrata, Aves. By Edward A. Wilson, M.B. With 13 plates. London, 1907.]

The second volume of the report on the Natural History of the National Antarctic Expedition (the publication of which was undertaken by the Trustees of the British Museum, on the condition that the specimens upon which it is based should be deposited in the National Collection at South Kensington) contains Dr. Wilson's account of the birds met with by the Expedition. We need hardly say that it is of very great interest. No collection of birds has ever been previously made at a spot so far south as the winter-home of the 'Discovery,' although, as bird-life is there nearly approaching its extreme southern limit on the earth's surface, the number of species met with was not so great as would have been the case a little further north. At the same time the novelty arising from the far-south locality (78° S. L.) greatly enhances the value of the series.

The Penguin may be said to be the predominant factor of vertebrate life in the South Polar Seas, as the Ice-Bear is in the far north, and supplies the adventurous explorer with a corresponding amount of excellent food. The largest and finest living representative of this group is the Emperor

Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*), of the previously little-known habits and haunts of which we have a complete account in the present volume. This account extends to 36 quarto pages, and is illustrated by 7 coloured plates and 24 figures in the text. So nearly complete is the history of this bird now set before us by Dr. Wilson that instead of being the least-known species of the Penguin-family it has now become, perhaps, the best-known of the whole group. And its habits are certainly extraordinary. What can be more remarkable than a bird which lays its egg on an ice-field, and protects it from cold by retaining it on the upper surface of its feet during the whole period of incubation? No naturalist should fail to read Dr. Wilson's story of this and other wondrous phenomena exhibited by the Emperor Penguin, which are illustrated by a long series of excellent figures.

The only other Penguin of Victoria Land is the Adélie Penguin (*Pygosceles adeliae*), of which bird and its strange ways we have likewise an excellent history in the present volume. But, instead of breeding on the ice or on the beach at sea-level, this extraordinary bird chooses to make its rookeries "high up on the mountains." One wonders how "the young that are hatched out on such heights, nearly a thousand feet above the sea, can ever obtain a sufficiency of food. Yet they are well grown and healthy, thanks to the untiring efforts of their parents, which, during the breeding-season, form a constant stream passing up and down the sides of the mountain in beaten tracks."

On Macquarie Island, which was visited on the return of the 'Discovery' in November 1901, the Naturalists of the Expedition were fortunate in finding the King Penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonica*) breeding, and thus having the opportunity of comparing its habits with those of its larger relative. Like the "Emperor" the "King" holds its egg upon its feet "tucked in between its legs, and covered from sight by a loose fold of skin and feathers." The egg is thus kept away from the "wet and muddy quagmire on which these birds prefer to incubate."

After the Penguins the two Skua-Gulls of the Antarctic Seas are described—*Megalestris maccormicki* being the special form of the extreme south, while *M. antarctica* was met with only on Macquarie Island.

McCormick's Skua has the distinction of having been seen in 80° 20' S. L., which is further south than any other bird has been yet observed.

The remainder of the volume is devoted to the Petrels and Albatroses, which, as we all know, are highly developed in the Southern Seas, and as regards species and genera are more numerous than any other Antarctic Group, although, possibly, not so numerous in individuals as the Penguins. Dr. Wilson includes 24 of the Tubinares in his list, of which 16 are Petrels and 8 are Albatroses. Excellent accounts of the habits and customs of these birds are given, with critical remarks on the standing of several species.

The quarto plates which conclude the volume are beautifully drawn and coloured.

The 46 figures in the text also deserve our warmest commendation. They are mostly taken from the sketches of Dr. Wilson and Mr. Skelton, but Mr. Royds and others have also contributed to the series. As regards ornithology, at any rate, we are satisfied that the members of the National Antarctic Expedition have executed the task assigned to them in a most efficient manner.

XXXVIII.—*Letters, Announcements, Notes, &c.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors" :—

SIRS,—In your last issue ('Ibis,' 1907, p. 483) you state that it is by no means certain that the so-called *Cygnus davidi* is only a "variant" of *C. bewicki*, and not a good species. I think I have sufficient material at hand to be able to affirm that you are quite right.

The original "*Cygnus davidi*" of Swinhoe (P. Z. S. 1870, p. 430; *op. cit.* 1871, p. 416) is without doubt not a true